



Department of Justice

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11/09/07

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RIVERDALE WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO PREPARING FALSE INCOME TAX RETURNS

Atlanta, GA - DONNA WRIGHT HODGE, 52, of Riverdale, pleaded guilty today in federal district court to aiding and assisting in the preparation of false income tax returns.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "Dishonest tax return preparers who engage in the systematic filing of fraudulent tax returns cause tremendous financial loss to the United States Treasury and ultimately to the millions of Americans who comply honestly and conscientiously with the tax laws. We will continue to investigate and prosecute tax return preparers who file fraudulent tax returns or assist others in doing so."

According to United States Attorney Nahmias and the information presented in court: HODGE worked as a tax return preparer at H&R Block during tax seasons 2001-2002, and as a self-employed tax return preparer during tax season 2003. HODGE prepared returns on behalf of her clients that claimed false medical and charitable deductions and false business expense deductions, in many cases from non-existent businesses, or that claimed exemptions to which the taxpayers were not entitled. The false expenses and deductions were sizeable, and resulted in the issuance by the IRS of refunds to which the taxpayers were not entitled. H&R Block reported the suspected fraud to the IRS after receiving a complaint from one of their clients, who noticed the false information on his return. HODGE, who was interviewed by IRS investigators, falsely claimed that she always required supporting documentation for the information she put on the returns, and that she always reviewed the returns in detail with her clients. The clients confirmed that the information HODGE placed on the returns was false, and denied giving HODGE any documentation to support the false information on their returns.

HODGE was indicted in April 2006 on twelve counts of aiding and assisting in the preparation of fraudulent and false income tax returns. She pleaded guilty to all twelve counts. She could receive a maximum sentence of three years in prison and a fine of up to \$100,000 on each count.

Sentencing is scheduled for January 17, 2008, at 4 p.m., before United States District Judge Charles A. Pannell.

This case is being investigated by Special Agents of the Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation Division.

Assistant United States Attorney Teresa D. Hoyt is prosecuting the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney, or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.